



Grilling Safety Tips from the York County Department of Fire and Life Safety

There is nothing like outdoor grilling. It is one of the most popular ways to cook food; however, a grill placed too close to anything that can burn is a fire hazard. They can also cause some serious burn injuries. Follow these simple tips from the National Fire Protection Association and the York County Department of Fire and Life Safety, and you will be on the way to safe grilling.

FACTS

- July is the peak month for grill fires.
- Roughly half of the injuries involving grills are thermal burns.

SAFETY TIPS

- Propane and charcoal BBQ grills should only be used outdoors.
- The grill should be placed well away from the home and deck railings and out from under eaves and overhanging branches.
- Keep children and pets at least three feet away from the grill area.
- Keep your grill clean by removing grease or fat buildup inside the grill and in trays below the grill.
- Never leave your grill unattended.
- Always make sure your gas grill lid is open before lighting it.

CHARCOAL GRILLS

- There are several ways to get the charcoal ready to use. Charcoal chimney starters allow you to start the charcoal using newspaper as fuel.
- Blocks of fire starters that are typically made up of paraffin and sawdust are safe and effective. Just place pieces amongst the coals and light them like candles. They burn long enough to start the coals.
- If you use a starter fluid, use only charcoal starter fluid. Never add charcoal fluid or any other flammable liquids once the fire is lit.
- Keep charcoal fluid out of the reach of children and away from heat sources.
- There are also electric charcoal starters, but these get extremely hot and stay hot for a while after they are disconnected. Be careful where it is laid to cool, and be sure to use an extension cord that is rated for outdoor use.
- After grilling, let the coals cool completely (at least 72 hours) before disposing in a metal container.

PROPANE GRILLS

- Check the gas tank hose for leaks before using it for the first time each year and when changing the tank.
- Apply a light soap and water solution to the hose. A propane leak will release bubbles.
- If your grill has a gas leak, by smell or the soapy bubble test, and there is no flame, turn off the gas tank and grill.
- If the leak stops, get the grill serviced by a professional before using it again.
- If the leak does not stop, call the fire department.
- **If you smell gas while cooking, immediately get away from the grill and call the fire department.** Do not move the grill.
- If the flame goes out while cooking, turn the grill and the gas off, and wait at least **15 minutes** before re-lighting it.

If you have questions or would like any more information, please contact the Fire and Life Safety office Monday through Friday from 8:15 a.m.-5:00 p.m. at 757-890-3600. For emergencies, call 9-1-1.